HARAMBEE FLAME!

VOL. XII, NO. 1 JAN., 1991

In This Issue:

EDITORIAL: Looking Back/Looking Forward; FROM OTHER SOURCES: Political Prisoners In U.S., Africans In U.S. Military Stand Up To Uncle Sam, Haitian Elections, Nigerian-Led Team Makes Scientific Break-Through, Black United Fund Assists Landowners; BOOKS; POETRY; Etc.

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Alaga(Chairman) - Hani Shaib(Robert Toney)
Lso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms) - Syl. Jones
Olotu Eko(Education Chrmn.) - John Williams
Akowe(Secretary) - Tony Haggan
Eleto(Admin. Chrmn.) - Decabooter Williams
Akapo(Treasurer) - Hasan Muhammad
Akewi(Librarian) - Rodney Freeman

*Olopon-ile(Earth-bearer) - Mondo
*Olomi(Water-carrier) - Larry Scott

*honorary position

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

EDITORIAL

This past year wasn't a good one for African people in America. It was the year of African politicians running for office in campaigns in which, to appeal to Caucasian voters, they often seemed to pretend they weren't "really black." It was the year of continuing and increasing slaughters of African people by African people on America's urban streets and the year of more and more angry and frustrated African communities calling upon generally Caucasian-controlled police departments to solve the prblems of drug use and gang violence and, in the process, inviting the police to suspend our Constitutional "rights" in the name of a "war on drugs." It was the year of more police murders and brutalizations of African people and African brick-and-bottle reactions, while many of these same brick and bottle-throwers would use uzis, street-sweepers, AK-47s, and other lethal weapons in conflicts with their own Sisters and Brothers. It was the year of Operation PUSH calling for a boycott of Nike instead of launching a massive campaign to discourage African youth and their parents from purchasing any ridiculously expensive athletic shoes from any company. It was the year of 2 Live Crew delivering raps of ignorance and utter disrespect for African people and African women in particular and being defended by certain Africans, against attacks by the Caucasian media and legal system, on the basis of 2 Live Crew's raps being part of our "African-American cultural traditions."

Africans in Africa, in 1990, found themselves in a situation where the ending of the cold war between Eastern and Western bloc countries and the eruption of political and economic turmoil in Eastern Europe served to diminish the flow of economic assistance from both blocs. It was the year of the beginning of negotiations between the African National Congress and a South African government which had already made it clear that it would not freely give in to demands for majority rule, without special "dispensations" for the occupying min-

ority.

In Panama, more and more mass graves were discovered, revealing more corpses of African people killed by the U.S. military; and thousands of Panamanians, many, if not most of them, African, continued to be homeless, their homes destroyed during the U.S. invasion.

1990 was the year in which thousands of African men and women in the U.S. military were shipped off to Saudi Arabia to risk their lives for U.S. oil companies and Bush's "manhood."

In short, 1990, for African people, was not a very good year. But there were some bright signs. Somehow, the spirit of Malcolm began to make itself manifest in the consciousness of young African people throughout the U.S.; the African continent was appearing on increasing numbers of t-shirts, medallions, and other apparel; African students, oftentimes with the support of African faculty, were pushing for Afrocentric curricula in America's highschools, colleges, and universities; some groups, such as the Black Panther Militia in Milwaukee, began making the principle of self-determination real by trying to address drug and violence issues in African communities on their own initiative rather than begging Caucasian-run municipal governments and local police; and there were some other bright signs.

We must hope, and work our butts off toward the fulfillment of such hope, that 1991 is a better year than this last one was and that it will be a year of many more bright signs and many more actual positive developments.

We hope that 1991 will be the year which witnesses the African-owned press in America turning away from its too common focus on bourgeois social nonsense and beginning to seriously address crucial social, economic, and political issues, and from an Afrocentric perspective.

We hope that, this year, the African-owned press will stop giving adulation to house negroes, like Colin Powell, who make careers out of bleeding(or directing others to bleed) when "the white man says 'bleed'" and begin to challenge the prudence and morality of African people joining the ranks of Uncle Sam's military "services." We hope the African-owned press will stop carrying ads for ham hocks, chitterlings, and other food products that are clearly dangerous to the physical health of African people; will stop carrying ads for hair-straighteners and "relaxers" and other products which are designed to de-Africanize our appearance; will go on an editorial offensive against African politicians, "educators," and other African brahmins who are betraying our collective interests and doing so clearly; and will otherwise become actual advocates for the rights and common interests of African people in this country and in other parts of the world.

We hope that those African people on the streets who are learned(in an Afrocentric sense) and wise will get the message across to our young men and boys that they are acting on behalf of the interest of America's racism when they assault or kill or sell drugs to people in their communities; that our learned and wise will begin to practice the seven principles which we give tribute to during Kwanzaa, such as the principles of ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa(cooperative economics), and kujichagulia(self-determination), by establishing community-owned businesses(clothing stores, farmers markets, etc.) by which we may begin to be able to have at least the bare beginnings of self-sufficiency; that our learned and wise will turn our heads from integration as an issue in what is inaccurately referred to as "education" and lead us in the direction of instituting our own schools in which African students may obtain an Africa-centered education and, at the same time, battle for Afrocentric curricula in existing schools in our communities. We hope that the learned and wise

among us will multiply.

We hope that 1991 will be the year in which African leaders in Africa will begin to release themselves from the bondage of European economic and political ideologies and search the history of Africa for building-blocks by which they may construct economic, political, and other systems of thought and practice that will truly serve African masses; that they will work toward a United Africa in which a motley continent can function as a nation while, at the same time, respecting the rights and beauty of the many different ethnic groups and their respective cultures; that they will seek to establish a common, Africa-wide currency and develop intra-continental trade practices which will lessen the continent's dependency on its former colonial masters and other entities which have the eye of the wolf on Africa as if it were a crippled sheep; that the African National Congress, the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Azanian Peoples Organization, and other liberation(?) groups in Azania will conduct negotiations among themselves so that they will become a unified force and drive the alien occupiers from their land.

There is much that we hope for. May 1991 bring us unity and rumors of unity so that we will have the strength to see to the fulfillment of our hopes.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ADDRESSES ISSUE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN U.S.

"An international tribunal has found that substantial numbers of political prisoners and prisoners of war are incarcerated in the United States.

"According to the tribunal's verdict Dec. 10, 'These prisoners have been incarcerated for their opposition to U.S. government policies and actions that are illegal under domestic and international law'. The U.S. violations include the denial of the right to self-determination and the right to resist genocide, colonialism and militarism, according to the verdict.

"The verdict came after a weekend of reviewing written and oral testimony Dec. 7-9 at Hunter College in New York City. The special International Tribunal on the Violation of Human Rights of Political Prisoner and Prisoners of War in U.S. Prisons and Jails was convened by 88 sponsoring and endorsing U.S. organizations.

"The tribunal calims jurisdiction in the matter based on the principles of international law under the U.N. Charter as employed in the Nuremburg trials after World War II...

"The government has criminalized their struggles for national liberation, violated international law and committed genocide on the people of these movements(liberation), she(Jan Susler of the People's Law Office in Chicago) said...

"The panel was astonished at the harsh sentences imposed on political activists. Panelists said the disparity between sentences imposed for political and 'common' crimes belies the government's contention that there are no political prisoners in this country and that political ac-

(Cont. on p. 8)

BOOKS

"African stories, wherein the characteristics of humanity are given an African emphasis, should be used to create African people to create African stories. The core of the collection of such stories would be classic or first-rate works which express what Africans have felt and thought about their lives and societies and the world, particularly in the classical periods of African civilization, such as Pharaonic Egypt, pre-Islamic Nubia, the West African empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhay, etc. Only when such materials are assembled, can African humanities(instead of European, Arab or any other non-African humanities) have pride of place in the education of Africans. As I have argued elsewhere, 'If charity is to begin at home, then the sensible procedure is for Africans to master African literature, philosophy, history and cultural traditions before venturing to study those of other lands'. In other words, African education ought, properly, to be based on a tradition of African humanities...

"...this anthology aims to stimulate a displacement of Euro-assimilationist, academic literature from its dominant place in Africa, and to help replace it with the Afrocentric, non-academic literature which, by rights, should form the mainstream of African literary culture."

The above passages are from the introduction to VOICES FROM TWENTIETH-CENTURY AFRICA: GRIOTS AND TOWNCRIERS. This work is a collection of poems, praise-songs, tales, etc. from all over Africa.

VOICES' literary samplings range from the historically interesting, to the down-right entertaining, to the unquestionably profound. Despite this, it is worth reading for the introduction alone, which speaks provocatively of the enslavement of many African "scholars" to European literary traditions and a Eurocentric set of literary standards and ideas and related matters.

(Cont. on page 14)

tivists are nothing more than common criminals...

"...the panel concluded that 'the use of surveillance, infiltration, grand juries, preventive detention, politically motivated criminal conspiracy charges, prejudicial security and anonymous trial juries deprive political activists of fair trials guaranteed under domestic and internal law'...

"'The statement prepared by the judges will be published and circulated to members of the U.S. Congress, U.N. missions and observers in New York and international and national human rights organizations', tribunal coordinator Dr. Luis Falcon said at a press conference Dec. 10.

"Falcon said the tribunal's final declaration would be used on behalf of the prisoners before the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, the Organization of American States' Human Rights Commission and the international conference on human rights scheduled for next year in Moscow..."

Note: Partial listing of Tribunal panelists--

Jawad Boulus, Palestinian lawyer;
Org. of African Unity representative;
member of the British House of Lords;
law professors from universities in Peru, Australia, and Germany;
Yuki Tanaka, Australian pol. sci. prof.

-from "U.S. Convicted: People Imprisoned For Politics, which appears in Dec. 19 THE GUARDIAN, page 5

AFRICANS IN U.S. MILITARY STAND UP TO UNCLE SAM

"Two Army reservists stationed here(Oakland, CA) are the first African-American women to file for conscientious objector discharges since the August U.S. Persian Gulf deployment.

"Azania Howse, 35, and Farcia De Toles, 21, who work at the Oakland Army Base, told reporters at a press conference at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Dec. 13 that they enlisted to learn job skills and earn money for college, not to go to war...

"Meanwhile, on the East Coast, a Haitian reservist claimed victory in his fight with the Air Force. Ronald Jean-Baptiste, 22, who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., accepted an 'other than honorable' discharge Dec. 17 in exchange for the Air Force dropping charges against him stemming from his refusal to ship out to Saudi Arabia...

"Tahan Jones, 21, a Black Marine reservist who has also applied for a CO discharge(GUARDIAN, Dec. 12), joined the two women at the press conference. The three criticized the military for recruiting heavily in communities of color. Jones noted that 'Blacks have been used as cannon fodder throughout U.S. history'..."

-from "Two File For CO Status; Jailed GI Discharged," which appears in the Dec. 26 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.), page 3

HAITIANS ELECT LIBERATION THEOLOGIST

"...The 37-year-old Aristide(Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, winner of the Dec. 16 presidential election), a soft-spoken but staunch anti-imperialist and anti-Duvalierist, captured more than 70 percent of the vote in an election where voter registration exceeded the official estimate of 3.2 million adults. Virtually the entire country showed up at the polls, despire a political climate of intense danger and violence aimed primarily at Aristide supporters by the notorious Tontons Macoutes, the paramilitary force built by and loyal to the former Duvalier regime...

"...At press time, incomplete election tallies showed that 'Titid', as Aristide is nicknamed,

beat his closest rival and U.S. favorite, Marc Bazin, by 30 percentage points. Meanwhile, supporters of his Lavalas('The Avalanche' in Creole) campaign consistenly defeated better-financed centrist candidates to produce a government that is not only unified but strongly to the left...

"Also pushed to the side by Aristide's win are the other two members of Haiti's traditional 'Big Three': the army, including the Duvalierist camp, and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Big Three all opposed and belittled Aristide and his stated mission 'to uplift the poor' until well past the 12th hour. If anything, the Big Three represent a not-so-holy tri triad that Aristide has directly blamed for keeping Haiti in its chronic state of terror and apalling misery..."

-from "Justice Is The Big Winner In Haitian Vote," which appears in the Dec. 26-Jan. 15 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago)

AFRICAN FROM NIGERIA LEADS RESEARCH TEAM IN

ELECTRO-OPTICS BREAKTHROUGH

"...Researchers have been trying to develop polymers that they hope would some day replace silicon chips in computers. These polymers are made to be extremely light-sensitive and they make use of light, rather than electricity, as used in silicon chips, to process information.

"The group of scientists who have come to be known as the 'Rochester Group', is headed by a Nigerian, Dr Samson Ally Jenekhe, an Assistant Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Rochester in Rochester, New York...

"He(Jenekhe) says that the polymer changes its

structure in just one trillionth of a second after it's exposed to a light beam. The silicon chip takes one billionth of a second to switch between two states, he says...

"In simple terms, sunglasses or goggles coated with this polymer could be made to turn black when hit with intense radiation, protecting laser scientists or pilots from eye injury.

"According to the US based Business Democrat and Chronicle, these new kinds of optical materials are being studied around the world because they're necessary to the new technology of electro optics - sometimes called photonics, optronics or optoelectrics - which uses light as a means to gather, store, or transmit and manipulate information...

"The ultimate aim of electro-optic research is the optical computer - a computer which in theory would be 1,000 times faster and more efficient than computers using electricity. Electronics signals create interference; light doesn't; this means that circuits could be placed closer together.

"A light-sensitive polymer, such as the one developed by Jenekhe, could someday be used for switching currents of lights just as transistors switch currents of electricity...

-from "Samson Ally Jenekhe: The Billion Dollars Optics Man," which appears on page 5 of the Dec. 13-19 NIGERIA HOMENEWS(London, England)

AFRICAN LAND-OWNERS IN SOUTH GIVEN CRUCIAL ASSISTANCE BY BLACK UNITED FUND

"This past Oct. 7 when African-Americans in Beaufort, S.C. were within hours of losing their land, their homes and part of their heritage, the Black United Fund of New York(BUFNY), in cooperation with Black United Fund of Pennsylvania and Black United Fund of Illinois, extended a helping hand. BUFNY loaned property owners money to pay their delinquent property taxes and hold on to land which had been in some of their families for over 100 years...

"BUFNY helped by first identifying an organization in Beaufort to work with them.

"Penn Community Center, a local organization that has helped Beaufort residents with their land problems since 1862, when the vision of '40 acres and a mule' began, became that organization...

"Next, a local attorney, Vernal Scott, was hired by BUFNY to handle such matters as setting up the loan agreements as well as familiarizing the landowners with laws governing the owning of land and the importance of keeping a will, to getting a deed for the property...

"Two months after BUFNY offered low-interest loans to help people in Beaufort, there were results. One landowner has already paid off her loan in full...Another, despite being a single mother and unemployed due to disability, manages to come up with her $5 a month loan payment...

"BUFNY's interest in land development began...in 1982 when Eady(Kermit Eady, founder and president of BUFNY) recommended, in a proposal to the National Black United Fund's Board of Directors, that the organization support land development projects throughout the country to assist in building a stable economic base for the survival of

(Cont. on inside back cover)

RAINBOWS ARE UNCOMPROMISING

No color should have to compromise
to be a part of the rainbow
Each color radiates its own beauty
one no less than any other/
No color should have to compromise
to be a part of a religion
or should have to fade
in the spectrum of faces
equal in their separate hues/
No color should have to compromise
in the kaleidoscope of friendships
one pigment as intense in its glow
as the next/
No color should have to bleed away
in the glare of racism
stark in its ugliness
as the rainbow is in its beauty.

Afrika X Shaheed Khaleel
a.k.a Derek William Dixon
Edited by Mondo

BOOKS

We have spoken in previous editions about AFRIKAN PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS, Book I. Author Ishakamusa Barashango has, as folks say, "outdone himself" with the publication of Book II of AFRIKAN PEOPLE...This volume, unlike the first, says little about European holidays but focuses on political and social history of Europe, Britain's in particulary, and offers contexts in which we are able to see Europe and Africa in comparison. While this volume is serious biznis, there are some recountings of historical events and situations that are pretty damned humorous.

We haven't read it yet but wish to announce the publication of a book by a local African woman, Joyce A. Joyce. Her work is entitled RICHARD WRIGHT'S ART OF TRAGEDY.

VOICES FROM TWENTIETH-CENTURY AFRICA: GRIOTS AND TOWN CRIERS by Chinweizu
Published by Faber and Faber

AFRIKAN PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS(II) by Rev. Ishakamusa Barashango
Published by IVth Dynasty Publishing Company

RICHARD WRIGHT'S ART OF TRAGEDY by Joyce A. Joyce
Published by University of Iowa Press

LAZARUS AND THE HURRICANE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE FREEING OF RUBIN "HURRICANE" CARTER
by Chaiton and Swinton
Intrac Ltd.
2 Levendale Road, Box 220
Richmond Hill, Ontario
Canada L4C 4H2

BACK IN TIME

The coolness of Bop was a vector from black and blues with veins tributaries going all directions We were cool because we were not "country," not first generation. We'd been up here and dug what it was and we could sound like we had been up here and knew what was going on. The hot quality of R&B we dug, but we translated that into "frantic" I guess because that described us to ourselves and what we sounded like. Frantic. In sharp endless motion. But even frantic was cool in the blues sense. Because weird, frantic, hip, cool all meant to be other than that which was everywhere perceived deadly in day-to-day American reality.

Our cool, which went hand in hand with Bop(not the later commercial definition), meant other than regular America--we were not in gangs we were not loud and unruly we did not want to get sweaty and still be frustrated(when just a minute ago we were sweaty as we could get under Lynn Hope and Big Jay McNeely). We still might go up to parties and dance to Lloyd Price, "Lawdy Lawdy, Miss Clawdy," and that was in us, but even in those sanctums we was cool we moved through those blue lights under those red lights trying to sidestep the ugliest parts of our American ghetto reality.

...The black had shaped us, the yellow had taunted us, the white had terrified and alienated us. And cool meant, to us, to be silent in the face of all that, silent yet knowing. It meant knowledge. It meant being smart, intelligent too. So we hooked up the weirdness and the intelligence. Dizzy's hornrim BeBop glasses, the artist's tam, these spelled some inner deepness to us. It was a way into ourselves further, and sometimes because we went into ourselves, we seemed quiet on the street

Source: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY LEROI JONES/AMIRI BARAKA, Freundlich Books

Note: "yellow" is a reference to light-skinned African people. "Dizzy," of course, is Dizzy Gillespie.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Ngoma" is Swahili for drum. Africans used drums to communicate with each other. When Africans enslaved here in the U.S., they continued to use drums to communicate. They used drums to spread the news about slave insurrections; consequently, the slave-owners banned the drum. Ngoma is a televised drum.

Ngoma is aired every Tuesday at 5:05 p.m. on Cox Cable channetl 23(Time is subject to change. Call Cox Cable at 551-1605 for confirmation of time). On Ngoma, we will have news, entertainment and information on what's happening in Omaha, the U.S. and the world. We will have updates on the status of political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. and abroad. We will bring important historical moments to your attention and show how they relate to the present. We will discuss the importance of developing an African ideology.

NGOMA
P.O. Box 111003
Omaha, NE 68111
(402) 457-5026

Subscribe to the FLAME

$7/one year

the African-American community and the organization.

"...In 1910, over 15 million acres of farmland was owned by African-Americans...

"The active number of acres of farmland between 1950 and 1969 declined from 12 million to 5.5 million acres. African-American farmland ownership continues to decline so rapidly that there is growing concern African-Americans will be landless by the year 2000."

-from "BUFNY Helps South Carolina residents Keep Family Lands," which appears on pages 10 and 42 of the Dec. 29 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS

Editor's Note: While our stated editorial policy expresses plainly what the mission of the HARAMBEE FLAME is, it might be in order for some explanation to be given as to the as to the function of the "From Other Sources" feature. Generally, this feature seeks to inform our readership about events and developments about and of concern to African people. More specifically, we seek to make and/or keep our readership aware of the problems African people face due to racism, neo-colonialism, and capitalism; to unmask those persons, groups, and institutions(such as the U.S. government, for example) which portray themselves as friends of African people but who are actually our enemies and/or act against our interests; and to point out constructive things which African persons, groups, and institutions are doing on behalf of African people and our collective interests. In seeking out news of these events and developments, we look first to publications owned and run by African people and, second, to those publications which, while not African-owned, are at least non-Establishment. Not only are these newspapers and magazines the best sources of the kinds of information we wish to provide you with but, by citing them, we seek to promote them as alternatives to Establishment/Caucasian-owned news sources.